

IRTS Radio News Bulletin Sunday 30th November 2008

Webmaster Wanted

The role of the IRTS web site includes keeping members informed about local and international amateur radio activities,

The job of the Webmaster is to maintain and develop the web site so that it fulfils this role in an interesting and accessible way. IRTS is looking for applications for the position of Webmaster. Like all of the society's officer positions, this is a voluntary position.

Members interested in being appointed Webmaster should indicate their interest to the society's president Finbarr Buckley EI1CS (buckleyf1(-AT-)eircom.net) and demonstrate their web skills by supplying links to web sites or web pages which they have developed.

The Brendan Awards

In 1995 the IRTS announced that they would award a pair of Challenge Trophies to the first amateur stations to establish two way communications across the Atlantic on the 144MHz band.

The Trophies, two inscribed cut glass vases, were kindly presented by Waterford Crystal and are known as the "Brendan Trophies". Brendan the Navigator was a 5th century explorer whose exploits are well documented in early Irish and Scottish literature. Brendan and his monks certainly left Ireland and are known to have reached Iceland and probably Greenland, while some accounts mention a "further place", possibly present day Nova Scotia or Newfoundland.

As was announced earlier in the year, the committee of the Society decided to broaden the original challenge and to rebrand them as the Brendan Awards. While the "Brendan Trophies" will continue as the premier award, there will also be a pair of "Brendan Shields" awarded for the first digital mode QSO and the "Brendan Plate" will be awarded for the first verified reception of a trans Atlantic signal. In addition, the "Brendan Medal", a triennial Silver Medal, will be awarded to the group or individual who has contributed most to the promotion of propagation studies on the North Atlantic 2m path.

The Brendan Awards are designed to give new impetus to the challenge of the Atlantic at VHF, to rekindle the spirit of experimentation which drove those early enthusiasts in the new science of radio, and to encourage dedicated expeditions, breathtaking antennas or serious propagation studies in an attempt to claim that elusive "First across the Atlantic". A full set of the detailed rules is available on the IRTS website.

Radio Frequency Plan for Ireland

The fourth edition of the Radio Frequency Plan for Ireland has been published by ComReg. This document shows, for each frequency band, the types of radio services that are permitted for operation in Ireland and, in addition, the radio services that are currently in use in each band.

While this publication is by no means essential for radio experimenters (as our own frequency allocations are detailed in ComReg's "Radio Experimenters Guidelines"), the new document is of general interest, if only to note the wide range of services using the frequency bands and in particular to see the services with which we share some of the bands.

The Radio Frequency Plan for Ireland can be downloaded from the ComReg web site. A link to the download page for this document is currently in the "KEY CLICKS!" section of the IRTS web site.

30 metre modes

Dáithí GI7OMY, who is the award manager for the 30 metre digital group for WISE (worked Wales, Ireland, Scotland and England) has pointed out that he has had to reject several applications recently where one of the submitted QSOs showed an EI station operating PSK on 30 metres, because Irish regulations allow Morse only on the 30 metre band.

While the IARU band plan shows "digimodes" from 10140 to 10150, the regulations for EI experimenters do not allow digimodes on this band. We plan to ask ComReg whether the restriction for EI experimenters is really necessary, given the provisions of the band plan, but pending any change in the regulations, EI experimenters should stick to CW only on 30 metres

AREN nets

Winter training Nets will commence on the 7th of December. The date and time of the nets being the 7th and 21st of the month at 19:30. It is envisaged that the net on the 21st of the month will be a digital mode training net. Members without email access should contact John, EI7IG at 0868167310 for more details.

500 kHz in Canada

In mid November, Radio Amateurs of Canada (RAC) announced that the amateur radio Regulator, Industry Canada, has accepted an RAC proposal for selected Canadian radio amateurs to operate in the vicinity of 500 kHz. The proposal states that RAC would recommend amateurs who would be licensed to operate in the 504-509 kHz band with a maximum power of 20 W ERP and bandwidth up to 1 kHz.

Stations operating in this band would be technically operating under Special Developmental Licenses, although they would all be radio amateurs. Distinct call signs would be used and the licenses would be renewable on an annual basis, subject to the amateur demonstrating the research that had been carried out. According to the RAC, these amateur operations would support efforts at the 2011 World Radio Conference (WRC-11), to secure an amateur allocation in the 600 meter band.

The US, under the auspices of the ARRL's 500 kHz Experimental Station, WD2XSH, is also conducting research in this band. Canada is the eighth country to do experimentation on 500 kHz; along with the US, the UK, Germany, Sweden, the Czech Republic, the Netherlands and Romania.

Dublin European City of Science

Dublin has been chosen as European City of Science for 2012. The event is expected to attract 8,000 Irish and international delegates to the city in July of that year.

Minister for Science and Technology Jimmy Devins said the decision today was “recognition of the great strides that Ireland has made in the area of science technology and innovation”.

Shannon Basin Radio Club

The Shannon Basin Radio Club Sprint Challenge will be held on Sunday 30th November between 14:00 and 18:00. Please see www.shannonbasinradioclub.com for contest rules. Logs to be forwarded to Brian EI8IU at qthr or to brian ei8iu(-AT-

Limerick Radio Club

There was a good turn-out for the November meeting of the Club at the Limerick Institute of Technology. Alan EI8EM gave a very interesting talk on “HF DX-ing. He suggested some very useful operating tips for anyone seriously interested in working DX and pile-ups. Alan was speaking from first-hand experience of working DX, as he has worked 334 countries and is currently on the ARRL DXCC Roll of Honour. Our sincere thanks to Alan for a very interesting and informative presentation.

The next meeting of the Club will be held on Thursday 11 December 2008 at the Limerick Institute of Technology at 7:30 pm. The annual Christmas Quiz will be held, once again under the stewardship of Pat (EI9GY) & Liam (EI4GB). The Quiz, with prizes galore, has proven a most enjoyable evening in past years so a large attendance is expected on the night.

Sun Shows signs of Life

After two-plus years of few sunspots, even fewer solar flares, the sun is finally showing signs of life. David Hathaway of the NASA Marshall Space Flight Center believes that the solar minimum is behind us. His statement is prompted by an October flurry of five sunspot groups. That may not sound like much, but in a year with record-low numbers of sunspots and long stretches of spotlessness, five is significant. and represents a real increase in solar activity.

Even more significant is the fact that four of the five sunspot groups belonged to Solar Cycle 24, the long-awaited next installment of the sun's 11-year solar cycle. October was the first time that sunspots from new Solar Cycle 24 outnumbered spots from the old Solar Cycle 23. It's a good sign that the new cycle is taking off.

Solar physicists check two things to tell the difference between old and new cycle spots: a sunspot's heliographic latitude and its magnetic polarity. New-cycle sunspots always appear at high latitude, while old-cycle spots cluster around the sun's equator and the magnetic polarity of new-cycle spots is reversed compared to old-cycle spots. Four of October's five sunspot groups satisfied these two criteria for membership in Solar Cycle 24.

Items for inclusion in next weeks Radio News should be forwarded to Charlie EI8JB, via e-mail to “charlie dot Carolan at gmail dot com. Or by phone to 087-6265418

News can also be submitted via e-mail to “newsteam at irts dot ie” for automatic forwarding to both the radio and printed news services. Please note that items for the radio news should reach the editor no later than midday on Thursday in order to be guaranteed inclusion in the following Sunday’s bulletin.

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